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ROME—HER NEW DOGMA AND OUR DUTIES.

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY, AT

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, OXFORD,

ON THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE

BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, 1855.

BY

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CHANCELLOR OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER, AND LORD

HIGH ALMONER TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

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M DCCC LV.

A SERMON,

§c.

ST. LUKE i. 28.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women.

THE feast of the “Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary” falling upon this day, seems to call upon me to interrupt that general course of subjects which I had proposed to myself to handle here, and to address you upon the special matter for our meditation which is this day set before us by the Church.

At any time this would, I think, have been right and profitable. It would be in accordance with the tone of our Prayer-book, in which is appointed for our daily reading, the Blessed Virgin’s Psalm of Thanksgiving; one of those “first gratulations,” as our Hooker terms it, “wherewith our Lord and Saviour was joyfully received at His first entrance into the world, by such as in their hearts, arms, and very bowels embraced Him^a.” It would have been in accordance with the prophetic declaration of the

^a Eccles. Pol., lib. v. § 40.

Blessed Virgin herself, when under the afflatus of the Holy Ghost she declared, "For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed^b;" it would further have tended to guard us against what must, from the constitution of the mind of man, be on the one side our special danger. For in protesting against the fearful superstitions with which, as we contend, the simple truth of God's word has, as to this subject, been overlaid by papal error, it cannot be but that we should be tempted to run into the opposite extreme, and to withhold the honour due to her whom those against whom we protest have sought so unduly to exalt. And hence must flow evil to ourselves. Not, indeed, because we can trace either in the Word of God, or the practice of the primitive Church, any signs that she is entitled to, or received, any honour different in kind from other saints. On the contrary, we find both in the Word of God and in the records of the early Church, what seem to be specific cautions against the rise of that superstitious reverence which has since defaced so large a part of Christendom. Such, in the Word of God, are those passages in which, at the marriage of Cana in Galilee, our Lord rejects her interference with His miraculous working^c; and that in which, when "a certain woman

^b St. Luke i. 48.

^c So Epiphanius employs this text to check the excessive reverence for the Blessed Virgin which was manifesting itself in his day. "She herself worshipped Him who was born of her flesh. This the Gospel assures us of; relating how our Lord Himself said to her, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?'"

of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee^d." He replied, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it." And that again, in which, when "it was told Him by certain, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to see Thee . . . He answered . . . My mother and My brethren are these which hear the Word of God, and do it^e." Such, in the early Church,—not to multiply quotations where one may shew its temper,—is the caution of Epiphanius: "Let Mary be held in honour, let THE Lord be worshipped^f."

It is not, therefore, because she has any special prerogative or prevalence in heaven, that we cannot without loss refuse to her the high honour which belongs to her; but, first, because such a temper towards any of Christ's saints departed, must injure that reverential habit of mind which we so greatly need to cultivate; and, secondly, because we cannot fail in the most reverend esteem of her, without lessening our adoring gratitude for that inestimable blessing of the incarnation of our Lord, for bestowing which on man she was the chosen instrument. Well, therefore, may we this day remember the

Lest any should think her to be of a higher nature, He calls her 'woman,' as foreshewing that there should be heresies and schisms, and that no one through too much awe of her might fall into the folly of this heresy. She was indeed a chosen vessel, but was still a woman, and in nothing different in nature to others, though honoured as the saints." St. Epiphanius, iv. p. 1061, quoted in the "Christian Remembrancer," No. 76.

^d St. Luke xi. 27, 28.

^e St. Luke viii. 20, 21.

^f St. Epiphanius, Heres. 79, quoted by Bp. Pearson on the Creed, fol. 179.

caution given to us by the wise, learned, and holy Bishop Pearson: "Far be it from any Christian to derogate from that special privilege granted her, which is incommunicable to any other. We cannot bear too reverend a regard unto the mother of our Lord, so long as we give her not that worship which is due unto the Lord Himself. Let us keep the language of the primitive Church; let her be honoured and esteemed, let Him be worshipped and adored^s."

Well might we dwell upon this side of our danger, if we were not to-day forced rather, by what is happening around us in so large a portion of Western Christendom, to examine anew the verity of our own doctrine, and anew to arm ourselves, by the authority of Scripture and the practice of purer ages, against the new efforts of a prevailing superstition.

It is then to this, my brethren, specially that I would call your attention this afternoon; considering, so far as the needful limits of time render possible,—

I. What is the new doctrine with regard to the Blessed Virgin, which has been recently promulgated by the Roman Pontiff?

II. The penalties under which it has been declared.

III. Our reasons for protesting against the promulgation.

IV. The heretical tendencies, to say the least, which we charge upon the doctrine itself.

^s Pearson on the Creed, Art. iii.

V. The duties which so sad a spectacle enforces on ourselves.

First, then, what is the doctrine ?

It is, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was herself, by a miraculous interposition of God's providence, conceived without the stain of original sin. That the nature, therefore, with which she was born into this world was, from the first moment in which she began to exist, not that nature which all inherit who "naturally are engendered of the offspring of Adam," but another nature; free from that fault and corruption which, as an hereditary taint, infects every member of the fallen race who is naturally born into this world.

And now let us see, secondly, the penalties under which this doctrine is promulgated. They are those of the Church's anathema and the condemnation of God. Whosoever henceforth shall deny it is condemned as an heretic. "Let no man," says the decree, "interfere with this our declaration, pronouncement, and definition, or oppose or contradict it with presumptuous rashness. If any should presume to assail it, let him know that he will incur the indignation of the Omnipotent God, and of His blessed apostles Peter and Paul^h."

Thirdly, let us consider our reasons for objecting to this promulgation :—

^h Here, as elsewhere in this sermon, when this "Letter Apostolic" is quoted, the quotation is taken from the translation which appeared in the "Tablet" of Jan. 27, 1855,—a Roman Catholic source.

First, then, we object to it as an unlawful addition of a new article to the Creed. And here, first, we must establish that it is such an addition. Nor is the proof of this difficult. For that which is declared to be the revealed truth of God, which none can deny under pain of damnation, is by that declaration asserted to be an article of the Christian man's belief, the holding of which, when presented to him, is essential to his salvation. And this is what is done by Rome here. There can be no mistake as to this matter. Before the promulgating of this decree, any one within the Roman communion might, as she teaches, deny, with St. Bernard and St. Augustine, the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin and be saved; since that 8th of December, whosoever denies it must be lost. It is therefore, on their shewing, a new and necessary article of a Christian man's faith[§]. And, as such, this dogma is set forth by those who have declared it, having been published (on Friday the 8th of December,) in St. Peter's Church at Rome during divine service, in the presence of Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops, to the number of 2,000, and a vast congregation, estimated as amounting to 30,000 persons, and from thence published throughout the dioceses of all Bishops in visible communion with the Pope. It is then set forth as an article of the Creed, and if an article of the Creed, it is beyond all doubt a new

§ See an able article in the "Catholic Layman," Dublin, (a publication full of learning on the various points of our controversy with Rome,) vol. iii. p. 148.

article ; and as such, secondly, we object to its promulgation, as being contrary to the fundamental laws of Christ's Church. To establish this objection, we must first consider what the creeds are, and what is the Church's power concerning them. In the earliest days of the Church of Christ there were no creeds. To be free from such stereotyped forms of faith was in many respects the blessed privilege of her virgin purity ; for the reduction of the sacred mysteries of her belief into fixed and published sentences, inevitably imparts to them a certain air of formality, and endangers greatly the perfect reverence with which alone they can be safely contemplated. At that blessed age of her being, the Church, now fresh from the presence and discourses of her Lord, just baptized with the outpouring of Pentecost, guided by inspired apostles who had seen the Lord, and burning with her first love, was knit so closely together, that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul^h."

But this period was soon passed. Divisions early crept into the united fold. The words of Holy Writ were differently interpreted. The line of apostolical tradition became every day less broadly marked and less readily discerned. Then the instinct of the Church, quickened by the Divine Spirit, perceived the need of fixing in formal sentences, whilst yet agreement on them was possible, what had been from the beginning the message "once for all delivered to the saints." Thus rose the

^h Acts iv. 32.

creeds: they were the written record of that which, upon disputed points, the Church had held from the beginning; the true and lawful form of an apostolical tradition. As heresy attempted to disfigure any part of the common truth, the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, sought to ascertain and to fix, as to that disputed point, what had been from the beginning the, until then, universal teaching. Thus from the first there were certain fixed limits, within which alone she could declare any dogma to be a portion of the Creed. Whatever was to be thus included, must possess these marked characters. It must be a part of the original revelation, for to that no addition could be made: and to establish its place in the original revelation, it must first be capable of proof from Holy Scripture; next, it must be possible to trace it up, as held by the faithful, in an unbroken line from that time when the first outpouring of the Spirit fell upon the waiting apostles, "teaching them all things, and bringing all things to their remembrance, whatsoever Jesus had spoken unto themⁱ;" lastly, it must be received as such by the whole body of the faithful. Within these limits only were the creeds formed: they contained no new doctrine; they were the old doctrine used as a touchstone to detect the new falsehood. They did not even enlarge the knowledge of the Church; they did but formalize its own expression of the truth: and God in His providence permitted all the great doctrines of the faith to be assailed, whilst the

ⁱ John xiv. 26.

Church was comparatively young, and the unbroken line of transmitted interpretation could be thus recovered ; and whilst she was ONE in such a visible and active union that she could agree upon the common truth. Further, in every instance, after the canon of her sacred writings had been fixed, she appealed to them as the supreme authority, to prove those separate propositions as to the faith, which in their turn fixed for after times as true, certain interpretations of the text of Scripture. To exceed on any side these limits would have been to deny the completeness and sufficiency of the original revelation, to add something to what the Holy Ghost had once for all taught, and to set at nought the written volume of inspiration given as the abiding record of her Master's words. Every lawful addition then to the Creed must be made in accordance with these conditions. And now, if we try this newly propounded article by these conditions, we shall be able to prove its unlawfulness. For, first, it lacks the condition of the assent of the whole body of the faithful. It is assented to neither by the Eastern, nor by our own branch, of the universal Church. It is true that this argument will not weigh with Rome, because, after the exact pattern of the old Donatist schismatics, she claims to be exclusively THE catholic body, and makes, as they did, communion with herself the one condition of communion with her Lord. But to all beyond these comparatively narrow limits, this argument against her intrusive article is of itself unanswerable. But further : not only is

it thus unlawfully inserted in her Creed, because it lacks the consent of the Church now living upon earth, but next it falls under the same condemnation, because it is not the old truth held from the beginning, but a new proposition, which was not received of old. To prove this, we need but to compare a few of the plainest facts of history with the very words of the decree by which this dogma has been now promulgated.

“The Church,” it declares, “has never ceased to lay down this doctrine, and to cherish and to illustrate it continually by numerous proofs, and more and more daily by splendid facts. For the Church has most clearly pointed out this doctrine, when she did not hesitate to propose the conception of the Virgin for the public devotion and veneration of the faithful^j. By which illustrious act she pointed

^j The whole controversy as to the alleged immaculate conception of the Virgin turns so much upon this feast, that it may be well to add a word or two concerning it. Although the extravagant expression of certain writers had been preparing the way for the rise of the doctrine, yet it was not until about the middle of the twelfth century that it was fixed in any of the ceremonies of the Church. At that time the canons of Lyons instituted a feast in honour of the immaculate conception. Against this novelty St. Bernard remonstrated in a letter addressed to them; in which, amongst other remarkable passages, occur the following:—He expresses his wonder that they should have ventured to introduce “*novam celebritatem quam ritus Ecclesiæ nescit, non probat ratio, non commendat antiqua traditio.*” He expresses his own disbelief in the “*scriptum supernæ revelationes,*” which was asserted as its authority; and asks, “*Quo pacto sanctus asseretur conceptus qui de Spiritu Sancto non est?*” And again, shewing how endless would be the necessity of such miracles, should one

out the conception of the Virgin as singular, wonderful, and very far removed from the origins of

such as the immaculate conception of His mother be deemed needful for the Saviour's honour: "Quid si alius propter eandem causam etiam utrique parenti ejus festos honores asserit defendendos? Sed et avis et proavis idipsum posset pro simili causa quilibet flagitare et hic tenderetur in infinitum."

But, in spite of St. Bernard's remonstrance, the feast was established at Lyons; and a century and a half later the festival of the immaculate conception was observed in the oratory of the Roman Church at Rome; and the question of the doctrine began to agitate greatly the Roman communion.

The two great orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis espoused different sides of the argument; and the sentences of the Popes varied as either for the time predominated, until, in 1483, Sixtus IV., himself a Franciscan, issued his celebrated bull, condemning equally those who termed the doctrine a heresy, and the keeping of the festival a sin, and those who asserted it to be heresy to deny the doctrine.

These constitutions were adopted by the Council of Trent; the claimants of infallible authority not being able to settle the question.

The history of opinion on the subject is well expressed in the following words, which I extract from a remarkably able and complete article in the 76th number of the "Christian Remembrancer," which exhausts the subject in all its bearings; and of which, though the sermon was written throughout before I met with it, I have made free use, to illustrate these pages:—

"In fact, there have been three different systems on the Blessed Virgin Mary: one, and one only, is that of the early Church interpreting and speaking for Scripture; the other two belong exclusively to Rome. The first extends down to the time of St. Bernard, and teaches that all the natural descendants of Adam, without one exception, are under sin, both original and actual, and that the Blessed Virgin Mary is not excepted. The second, extending from St. Bernard to Clement XI., holds a conception indeed in sin, but a perfect cleansing immediately afterwards; and the third and last demands a perfect immaculateness both in and before the conception. The first, as we have said, is supported by Holy Writ and the

the rest of mankind, and to be venerated as entirely holy ; since the Church celebrates festival-days only

early saints ; the second claims to rest on miracles and miraculous revelations ; the third has gradually been evolved from the second, of which it is, in plain terms, a correction and an improvement. What would Rome say, were another Church to take on itself so to manufacture a doctrine, producing, after centuries of hesitation, intrigue, internal discord, cavillings, and self-contradictions, a system which, when at length exposed to the light of day, was found to be so utterly hostile to the peculiar prerogative of Him, who, condescending to be born of a daughter of Adam, yet was the Son of no earthly father, but was conceived,—that His birth should be without spot,—even of the Holy Ghost ? In such a case she might perhaps claim, with some truth,—with more, at least, than she can now,—to be the sole representative of our Heavenly Master, and the one depository of His truth on earth.”

Whoever wishes to examine the question further, will find in the “*Præscriptiones de Conceptu B. M. V.* ;” in the first volume of Launoy’s works ; in the *Loci Theologici Gerhardi*, vol. i. 173, Genæ. 1639 ; in *Walchii Bib. Theol. Sel. i. 208, ii. 1001*, Jenæ, 1757 ; and in the *Chemnitii Examen Concilii Trident.*, from which I subjoin an extract,—the whole matter of the argument. No. 43 of Dr. Wordsworth’s *Occasional Sermons*, which also I have freely used, is upon this subject, and, like all his sermons, full of matter.

The following is a translation from Chemnitz :—

“Augustine, in the 36th chapter ‘*On Nature and Grace*,’ says, ‘Concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the honour of the Lord, I will hold no question at all, when we are treating of sin.’ ‘For hence we know, that more grace was conferred on her to conquer sin on every side, because she was that one who obtained the favour to conceive and bring forth Him who it is certain had no sin.’” And this they so understand, as if he meant that Mary was not comprehended in the sentences of Scripture which speak of original sin. But inasmuch as he distinctly says that grace was conferred on Mary “to conquer sin,” it is most manifest that he does not mean, that Mary was conceived without sin ; for then there would have been no need for grace to be conferred on her “to conquer sin.” There-

of the saints." Here then we have, (1) an admission that, for the validity of the decree, it must

fore also he speaks everywhere of original sin in general terms, and excepts Christ only. De Fide ad Petrum, c. 56:—"Firmissime tene, et nullatenus dubites, omnem hominem qui per concubitum viri et mulieris concipitur, cum peccato originale nasci, impietati subditum, mortique subjectum, et ob hoc naturâ Filium iræ nasci."

De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia:—"Ideo Christus non de concubitu nasci voluit, ut hinc etiam doceret, omnem, qui de concubitu nascitur, carnem esse peccati: quandoquidem sola, quæ non inde nata est, non fuit caro peccati."

St. Ambrose on Luke:—"For among those born of woman, the Lord Jesus alone was holy throughout, who through the peculiarity of immaculate birth did not feel the contagion of earthly corruption."

The same on Isaiah:—"Every man is a liar, and none without sin, but God alone. Servatum est ergo, ut ex viro et muliere, id est per illam corporum commixtionem, nemo videatur esse expers delicti. Qui autem expers delicti, expers est etiam hujus conceptionis." And, indeed, Augustine says that he who thinks to the contrary contradicts the Scripture.

De Perfectione Justitiæ:—"Whoever thinks that there are, or were, in this life any man or any men, except the one Mediator of God and man, to whom the remission of sins was not necessary, is contrary to the divine Scripture, where the apostle says, 'By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death, and so passed upon all men, in that all have sinned.'"

And, Contra Julianum, lib. v. c. 9, he pronounces it to be heresy; for when he had said, "If without doubt the flesh of Christ is *not* sinful flesh, but *like unto* sinful flesh, what remains for us to understand, but that, except *that*, all other human flesh is sinful flesh?" And a little after he subjoins, "Whoever denies this is found out to be a detestable heretic." And there he manifestly affirms Mary to have been conceived in original concupiscentia, for he says, "Hence it appears, that that concupiscentia, by which Christ willed not to be conceived, made the stock of evil in the human race. Because the body of Mary, although it came from thence, yet did not transmit that

be possible to assert that it is the ancient truth which it enacts ; and next, (2) the best proof which can be given that the doctrine was thus held of old. From what remote antiquity then is this proof drawn? The answer is well worthy of notice.

The earliest date which the Pope can give for any declaration of the dogma, is that of the "illustrious act by which the Roman Church proposed the conception of the Virgin for the public devotion of the faithful." And when that "act" was wrought we may learn from a decree of Alexander the VIIth, the earliest of his predecessors whom the Pope dares to quote by name, as having "protected and defended the conception as the true object of devotion." For this decree informs us, that "this pious, devout, and laudable institution emanated from our predecessor Sixtus the IVth." Now

[concupiscence] to [His, Christ's] body, because she did not conceive from thence."

Bernard also says, "Except the Man Christ, that, which one humbly confesses, relates to all: 'I was conceived in iniquities, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.'" Ep. 174, ad Canonic. Lugdun.

This was the sentence of the ancient, true, and purer Church, built up from the clearest testimonies of Scripture. And, indeed, Lombard also (lib. iii. dist. 3.) says,—"Certainly it may be said and believed, according to the concurrence of the witness of the saints, that the very flesh of the Word was at first obnoxious to sin, even as the rest of the flesh of the Virgin, but that it was cleansed by the operation of the Holy Spirit; so that, being free from all contagion, it might be united to the Word." Therefore, even in the time of Lombard, the opinion was unknown, that 'Mary was conceived without original sin.'

Sixtus the IVth succeeded to the papacy almost at the close of the 15th century ; so that this is the earliest act which the Pope can allege to prove his proposition, that “the Church has never ceased to lay down this doctrine.”

But even this is not all ; for we cannot fully estimate the falsehood of this reference until we compare it with the decree itself. For this, so far from implying, even at that late period, the implicit holding of the doctrine which is here insinuated, actually provides a special prohibition to guard against any being led by the fact of the festival to condemn those who *deny* the immaculate conception, “because the matter has not been decided by the Apostolic See.” Of so late a growth is this doctrine in the Roman communion itself, and so signally does this its novelty condemn its promulgation as an article of faith.

But even this is not the whole of this branch of our objection ; for not only is there no witness earlier than this most doubtful one, who himself lived almost 1500 years after Christ, who can be quoted as supporting it, but we are able to disprove by positive evidence the only other conceivable suggestion by which it could be justified, namely, that though not enunciated sooner, yet that within the bosom of the Church the doctrine was held implicitly from early times. For in answer to this, we assert not only that there is no evidence for it, but that the voice of catholic antiquity distinctly contradicts such a supposition. “Of thee,” for instance, says one, speaking of our Lord’s nativity, “He took

that which even for thee He paid. The mother of the Redeemer herself, otherwise than by redemption, is not loosed from the bond of that ancient sin^j.” “He therefore,” says the great Augustine^k *alone*, “who was at once made Man and remained God, had never any sin, nor took a flesh of sin, although He came from a maternal flesh of sin. For that of flesh which He took He either purified to take it, or in the taking purified it;” and so say all their own greatest authorities^l. Hear the judgment on this point of one of their bishops, by no means the least learned of their canonists^m:—“That the Blessed Virgin,” says Melchiorcanus, “was entirely free from original sin, is nowhere held in Holy Scriptures, taken in its literal sense; but on the other hand, in them is delivered the general law which includes all the sons of Adam, without any exception. Nor can it be said that this teaching descended to the Church through the tradition of the apostles, since such traditions have come down to us only through those ancient and holy writers who succeeded the apostles. But it is evident that those ancient writers had not received it from those before them . . . All the Saints who have mentioned

^j Eusebius Emissenus, Hom. ii. de Natur. Dom. (tom. v. pars iii. p. 554, Bib. Pat. Colon.) quoted in Serm. ii. 2. Hooker, edit. Oxon.

^k And again he says,—“Hominem Christum Jesum qui solus potuit ita nasci ut ei opus non esset renasci.” S. August. Enchiridion, c. 48.

^l S. August. de Peccatoris Meritis, lib. ii. § 24, B.

^m Loci Communes, p. 348; De Sanct. Auct., lib. vii. cap. iii. and i.

this matter have with one mouth asserted that the Virgin Mary was conceived in original sin. This St. Ambrose lays down, this St. Augustine repeatedly; this St. Chrysostom, this Eusebius Emisenus, this Remigius and Maxinus, this Bede and Anselm, affirm; this St. Bernard and Erhardus, bishop and martyr, with a multitude besides; this doctrine none of the saints have contravenedⁿ.”

Neither implicitly, then, nor in open declaration, has this dogma been a doctrine of the Church of old; and in now propounding it as an article of the creeds, here therefore, secondly, the Church of Rome has sought unlawfully to tamper with those venerable symbols of our faith, and to add of her own authority to the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

III. But once more, and above all; since the canon of Holy Scripture was complete, no declaration of doctrine could ever be inserted in the creeds, which could not be shewn to accord with that written Word of God. And when tested by this rule, the unlawfulness of this attempt will be most clearly proved. For not only is there no passage which can be alleged as even tending to prove it, but

ⁿ Melchior Canus, *De Sanctorum Auctoritate*, lib. sep., cap. iii. § 4, and cap. i. § 3. This testimony is made the more remarkable by the fact that the writer does not deny the possible truth of the opinion, but declares that there is no other way of rescuing the authority of the early fathers from the objections of heretics, than by the admission that the subject is not a matter of faith, and cannot promote it. So much for the boasted unity of doctrine in the Roman community.

against it stand arrayed the clearest sentences of Holy Writ. "For," says St. Paul, after examining the case alike of those without the law, as the heathen, or under the law, as the mother of Christ; "For there is no difference, for ALL have sinned,"—and therefore Mary,—“and come short of the glory of God; being justified,” not by immaculate conception, but “freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus^o.” And again, “There is none righteous, no, not one^p.” “But the Scripture hath concluded all,” and therefore Mary, “under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe^q.” And but once more, not to multiply quotations: “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned^r,” and “HE tasted death for every man^s.” Here then, again, by the plain decision of the supreme authority, we are brought to the same conclusion. The promulgation of this dogma has been an utterly unlawful attempt to coin a new article of faith; to add to the old deposit; to preach another Gospel. It needs no anathema of ours to brand so foul a treason against the sole prerogative of the God of truth. For it standeth written in His Holy Word: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I

^o Rom. iii. 24. ^p Rom. iii. 10. ^q Gal. iii. 22. ^r Rom. v. 12.

^s Heb. ii. 9. Compare Job xiv. 4; Ps, li.; Ephes. ii. 13.

now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed^t.”

Here then is our first objection to this promulgation. In the words of St. Vincent of Lirrens : “To teach anything to catholic Christians besides that which they have received, never is lawful, never has been lawful, never will be lawful; and to anathematize those who do teach anything besides that which has been once for all received, was always a duty, is always a duty, will be always a duty. . . . If any man shall teach a new dogma, let him be anathema^u.”

But next (IV.) we object, not only to any introduction of a new dogma, but we object also in particular to this as, to say the least, having direct tendencies to heresy^x. For it is no mere speculation; it is full of

^t Gal. i. 8, 9.

^u Vincent. Lirinensis, Common. i.

^x “And, firstly, there is a certain and not slight moral weight against Perrone, in the manner in which the early writers meet the opponents of their faith on the primary question of the nature and personality of our Lord; and their words do, as it appears to us, by anticipation, utterly quash and overthrow the doctrine for which Perrone is contending. They are all careful and scrupulous in laying it down,—in which they surely follow the holy apostles themselves,—that He was God the Son, taking upon Himself the nature of His own creature, man, of the blessed Virgin Mary, by miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost, that so He might escape that *contagio peccati* which attaches to all the natural descendants of Adam, without exception, and which He expiated by His death on the cross. . . .

“Had the early Gnostics known that it was an especial doctrine of Christianity, that His mother *also*, the naturally born

deadly consequences. For, first, if in the course of the divine process for working out our salvation, our fallen nature was pure from spot of sin in any one before that in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord, it was, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, sanctified wholly by the union of His Godhead with it, then is that one, and not He, the first fountain of new life to our corrupted race. This teaching, therefore, points us not to Christ, but to Mary, as the well-head of our restored humanity; and thus does it directly shake the great doctrine of the in-

daughter of mere human parents, was, from the first moment of her existence, exempt from all sin, what an advantage would it not have afforded them in their denial of His real and very manhood and human flesh, and how prone they would have been to avail themselves of it! and how could St. Irenæus have so dwelt, as he does, on every point of His identity with us as the Son of Man,—sin excepted in Him alone, and in no one else,—against the brood of Simon and Valentinus; or how could he have combated the idea, as he did, that the Son of a mother perfectly sinless, and therefore, as they might well have concluded, not really human, was not an incorporeal ‘Visus,’ as held by Saturninus, or a mere manifestation, ‘in formâ hominis,’ as Marcion believed? ‘Qui dicunt eum putative manifestum, neque in carne natum, adhuc sub veteri damnatione, advocacionem præbentes peccato, non devictâ secundum eos morte, quæ regnavit ab Adam usque ad Moysem etiam in eos qui non peccaverunt in similitudinem transgressionis Adam,’ (p. 248, Grabe). We might cite numberless passages from the works of this father and martyr, for the moral weight they contain, and the indication they give of the direction of his belief:—
 1. On the universality, with one only exception, of sin, both original and actual, in all men; and 2. That Christ took human nature from Mary, not already purified, but to make it pure by taking it.”—*Christian Remembrancer*, No. 76, p. 383, &c.

carnation^y, which teaches us that the union of Deity with our nature in His person made that nature uncorrupt, and that He deriveth into us from His person that incorruption which we need. Nor does the Roman communion shrink from this false conclusion; for, in strict accordance with it, she instructs her people to address the Virgin as the “*principium salutis mundi*,” the beginning and fountain of all benediction^a.” And then, further, if that nature which He thus took in the womb of His Virgin mother was not that which she, like others, inherited from Adam, but one made by God’s creative power to exist under new conditions of original purity, how can we say that He indeed took from her our very nature? Then was that quarry whence was dug that flesh which He united to His Godhead, not of our fallen, but of a new and different, nature; and then is His perfect brotherhood with us destroyed. To Mary then, again, and not to Him, must we look as having, like ourselves, a mother of the fallen race, and as being THE true link between incorruption and impurity. And yet once more: this last conclusion leads us to another reason why, in God’s

^y “That which in Him made our natures uncorrupt was the union of His Deity with our nature. He having Adam’s nature as we have, but incorrupt, deriveth not that nature but incorruption, and that immediately from His own person into all that belong unto Him.” Hooker, *Ecel. Pol.*, lib. v. § 56.

^z Novena Conceptionis, fifth day.

^a An Italian *Stellario* for the conception lately authorized at Rome. Both of these are quoted by Dr. Wordsworth in the notes to “*Occasional Sermons*,” No. 43.

Name, we protest against this dogma. For it is not merely accidentally, and by some deduced inference, that it thus endangers our faith in the true incarnation of our Lord, and points our eyes from Him to His mother as the medium between God and us; but this dangerous delusion is a part, and the crowning part, of a whole system which does thus place on the Mediator's throne the Virgin mother instead of the incarnate Son. For this is the grand characteristic of the whole Roman system of Mariolatrous imposture. It does confer upon the Virgin Mary the Mediator's office. It does not intentionally raise her to deity, although many of the words it sanctions do express even this amount of blasphemy, and though, in impiously imploring her to command her Son, it in some sort sets her even above deity^b. Still, however the Roman Church may incidentally favour this awful blasphemy, she undoubtedly disclaims it in intention. But she cannot disavow her substitution of the Virgin for her Son, upon the intercessor's seat. The whole system of Rome does make the Virgin mother the special mediator between God and man. It teaches sinners to look to her as more tender, more merciful, more full of pity, more able to sympathize with their infirmities, than is that true High-priest, who is such as "became us," because He is fitted by the perfect holiness, and yet true brotherhood with us, of the nature He assumed, "to

^b "Jure matris impera tuo dilectissimo Filio." Bonaventuræ, canonized in 1482, Opera, tom. vi. p. 466. Moguntiæ, 1609.

have compassion upon the ignorant, and upon them that are out of the way." Amongst all its defacement of the truth of Christ, this is perhaps the plainest and one of the most hideous features of Roman superstition. In this, as in an outward sign, may its corruption everywhere be traced, from the tawdry shrines of Spain and Italy to the "Mary-temples" of southern India.

Nor is any sign of evil in that communion more remarkable, than the festering growth with which, as with some germinating principle of corruption, this false doctrine is instinct. Generation seems to vie with generation in heightening to the very verge of direct blasphemy, the ascriptions of the Saviour's honour to His merely human mother. Litany succeeds litany in still grosser and more glowing language, until the Church's noble hymn of praise to the Almighty Father is travestied to exalt her glory, and the *Te Deum Laudamus* becomes a song of praise to Mary. Wherever, moreover, there has seemed of late to be a revival of warmth and earnestness of religious feelings within that communion, this special form of error, like some close-clinging parasite, has enlarged and multiplied its evil growth.

To this new and false dogma then we object, as being the culminating point of this deadly system; and as sure to act back again, with fresh agencies of evil, upon the unhappy body by which it has been promulgated. Already, indeed, we have proof of this new growth of evil, since the decree which

establishes the dogma contains words which but a little while ago would in our mouths have been condemned as the grossest calumnies; for it draws from its promulgator this practical conclusion: "Let all the children of the Catholic Church, most dear to us, hear these our words; and with a more ardent zeal of piety, religion, and love, proceed to worship, invoke, and pray to the most Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of God, conceived without original sin; and let them fly with entire confidence to this most sweet mother of mercy and grace, in all dangers, difficulties, doubts, and fears^c."

V. Lastly, brethren, suffer me to lay before you some of the duties which, as it seems to me, are enforced upon us by this sad spectacle of deep corruption within the Roman Church.

1. The first is that which, however inadequately, I have felt bound to attempt this day to discharge. It is to protest anew against this monstrous effort to corrupt, by man's additions, the revealed truth of God. We may not lawfully accept such new dogmas. On us in our day, as having inherited the pure deposit; on us as witnesses and guardians of the ancient faith; on us as solemnly set to interpret God's Word, as from old it has been interpreted,—the duty is imperative to declare that this is not

^c The words in the Latin are—"Audiant hæc nostra verba omnes nobis carissimi Catholicæ Ecclesiæ filii et ardentiori usque pietatis religionis et amoris studio, pergant, colere invocare exorare beatissimam Dei genetricem Virginem Mariam," &c. The translation in the text is here, as elsewhere in this sermon, copied from the Roman Catholic ("Tablet") paper.

what God's Word reveals; that it is not what apostles taught; that it is not what the Church has learned; that it is another Gospel; and so this day, from the bosom of this ancient University, as the bishop of this Church, set in trust with this guardianship, in God's Name, and with you all as witnesses, I solemnly denounce it.

2. Next, surely it is our duty, with all sadness of soul, to make on behalf of those who have so deeply fallen, our humble intercessions with our long-suffering Lord. For what sight can be sadder? Time was when the ancient Church of Rome was the especial guardian of the common faith. But she was lifted up, and she fell. Her very greatness proved her downfall. The honour, wealth, and greatness of the earth flowed with a strong tide into her, as the Church of the whole world's metropolis, and she grew proud and earthly, fierce and arrogant in her temper; priestcraft and superstition ruled her, and the purity of the faith fled far away: and now she has fallen even unto this. Who can read the official announcement,—“The Pope, officiating at St. Peter's, has declared the expected decree. The immaculate conception of the Virgin is declared to be the faith of the Church, and whoever denies it to be a heretic.—Rome is drunken with joy,”—who, I say, remembering how many souls this vast perversion of the truth has slain, by turning them from seeking in their only Lord the grace, mercy, and peace of which He, and not His mother, is the only fountain for the lost,—who can read the words, “Rome is

drunken with joy," and compare them with the awful vision, "And I saw the woman, whose name was mystery, drunken with the blood of saints^d," and not gaze with grief and fear at this sad spectacle of what was once the faithful city, now become an harlot? who would not weep even tears of blood at such a sight? who will not pray that now, even now, it may be granted unto her "to remember how she has received and heard, and to hold fast, and repent, lest the Judge should come upon her as a thief, and she know not the hour when He will come^e?"

3. Again, the sight of this evil surely enforces upon us another duty. For the sake of truth and for the love of souls, we, whose rule of faith is God's Word, and whose interpreter of Scripture is true catholic consent, are bound to hold faster than ever to these our real principles. Taught by the example of others, we should guard specially against *our own* dangers. No dread of evil imputations, no infection of the spirit of the day, no undue fears, even of the errors against which we protest, should lead us to shrink in any thing from adhering to our own principles, and so endangering on our side too the precious deposit of God's ancient truth. Who can say, if only we are kept faithful, what may not be yet in store for us as a nation and Church; or of what inestimable blessing we may be made the channel to the rest of Christendom? Many within the Roman communion are outraged by this new

^d Rev. xvii. 6.

^e Rev. iii. 3.

invasion of the truth. Already the warning has been addressed by one of his own sons to the Roman Pontiff:—"If you should command the reception of such a dogma,...it will be a new argument...That the Bishop of Rome is, like other men, a weak man, prone to sin, obnoxious to error; and that it may happen that he may become a prevaricator in his holy office, and be deceived, and endeavour to deceive^f." In how many hearts may not this same spirit be stirring? May we not hope that God, whose province it is to bring good out of evil, may through the very intenseness of this evil deliver some hitherto captive souls from the chains of error? And may it not be the special mission of our own communion to afford to such the haven which they need? To offer them Evangelical purity with Apostolical order; God's pure Word within Christ's holy Church; and so to be the blessed means at once of drawing them from the errors of superstition, and saving them from the shipwreck of unbelief? But for this end it is essential that we maintain, without flinching from reproach or yielding to the whispers of a specious liberality, our own catholic standing-place firmly and unmoved.

4. But we have yet another duty, as we contemplate this fearful spectacle; we have to separate ourselves from its evil. To us sounds forth the voice of warning, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues^g;" on us, as of old on the lingering patriarch, the long-suffering angel of wrath lays

^f Letters from the Abbé Laborde, of Lectouse, to Pope Pius IX., reprinted in "The Ecclesiastic," No. 23. ^g Rev. xviii. 4.

graciously His hands, hastening us in mercy from the doomed city. For to us there is here indeed, on this side also, a startling warning,—a warning which, when we look along our ranks and see places empty which were once—how nobly!—filled, who dare say that we do not greatly need; lest, tempted by its sweetness or allured by its sparkling promise, we taste one drop of the cup of her enchantments? For undoubtedly there are minds amongst us to which her promises are most alluring. Amidst the strife of opinions wherewith the soul is often torn well-nigh asunder, her voice of assumed authority is heard promising the peace of certainty; amidst the divisions which perplex and weaken us, she claims, and to a superficial glance appears, to be, the one only embodiment of Catholic unity. These are her spells; and mighty hearts—oh that the Spirit of the Lord might set them free!—have sunk entranced beneath them. Let no man undervalue their potency or trifle with their might. It is the very character of the cup of the sorceress, that its lightest taste so besots the subtlest intellect and subdues the strongest will, that her victim follows her bidding, lead him whithersoever it may. The only safeguard, therefore, is in the earliest and most instant refusal to drink of the wine of her fornication.

And this which we have seen happen before us should surely enforce this caution upon us. What though the cup of the sorcerer sparkle brightly, and he promise high, yet, if we see crowding in a shameful herd around him the transmuted forms of

those whom he has robbed of the reason and the gifts of man, who will taste of his enchantments? And is not a sight all too like to this opened here before our eyes? Have we not seen those who, amongst ourselves, had the sensitive consciences, the manly hearts, the pure love of truth, and the keen insight into its depths, which of God's great mercy our apostolic Church breeds in her true sons; but who have yielded to temptation and harboured discontent with what they had, and who thus have, step by step, been led on to submit themselves to Rome, when once in her toils, become the most implicit receivers of her uttermost corruptions? And why, if we suffer ourselves to follow them, why should we escape? Surely "in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird;" and is not this spread openly before our eyes; is not the latest end exposed to our gaze in this last act of the Roman Pontiff? Rome may promise us a certainty of belief, and an infallible guide, a rest for our aching spirits amidst weary distractions, and the unity of an unbroken body amidst countless divisions; but here we may see what is the real worth of these high-sounding offers: for first we see her vaunted infallibility and unity broken up and discredited by the manifest presence in her body of discord and contradiction; and next we see, from the beginning, what must be the end. They who cast in their lot with her must take her whole or take her not at all; and here we see her making false doctrine, condemned by God's Word, contradicted

by catholic antiquity, rejected by all the saints, and resting mainly for its credit upon the grossest inventions and most lying legends^h, articles of

^h The reception of a miraculous writing on the subject was the first justification of their new feast, alleged by the canons of Lyons, and discredited by St. Bernard. The following is another example of this species of authority:—"A French priest, who was in the custom of singing the hours of the Blessed Virgin Mary, returning from a house where he had committed adultery with another man's wife, entered a boat alone to cross the river Seine,—'Pelagus Sequanæ;' and as he sailed he began to sing the hours; and when he came to the invocation, 'Ave Maria,' and was got into the middle of the water, a great crowd of devils overthrew him, together with his boat, and carried his soul to hell. On the third day, the mother of Jesus came, with a vast company of angels, to the place of his torment, and said to the devils, 'Why do you torment the soul of my servant thus unjustly?' They replied, 'We ought to have him, and rightly, as he was taken in our works.' To which she replied, 'If he is his whose works he was doing, he ought in truth to be mine, as he was saying my matins when you seized him; so that you are more to blame than he is, in having acted thus unfairly to me.' On these words the devils dispersed, and fled hither and thither; and the Blessed Virgin Mary restored his soul to the body, and seizing him by the arm, whom she had saved 'ab utroque funere,' she commanded the waters to stand as a wall on the right hand and on the left, and brought him from the depth of the sea to a safe port. He in joy then fell down at her feet and said, 'O dearest Lady and most beautiful Virgin, thrice grateful to Christ, what shall I give you for the benefits which you have done to me? You have delivered me from the mouth of the lions, and my soul from the most grievous torments of hell.' To whom the mother of Jesus replied, 'I entreat you not for the future to fall into your former sin, lest a worse fate overtake you; and I beg you, besides, to celebrate yearly the festival of my conception on the 6th of the Ides of December, and teach it everywhere.' When she had said this, she ascended into heaven in his sight; and he, leading an

her creed. And, from the beginning, we know that to this they must assent at last, who assent to her at all. For the most part, the growth of error is so slow and gradual, it comes forth from truth with such minute degrees of exaggeration, with such severally small measures of deviation, that it is most difficult to fasten upon any one teacher, or even any one school or age, the crime of its evil parentage. But God has suffered us to see the work done openly before our eyes, that we may fly, as from His judgments, from the evil worker.

Let us take the caution. We have faults, evils, deficiencies, God knows, amongst ourselves; we feel them, perhaps groan under them, and would fain cast them out or impatiently fly far from them; and she, veiling from us the grossness of her own evils, invites us with honeyed words of seeming sympathy to fly from them to her. But see in this one instance what is indeed the truth in all. See from the first where you must end, and remember that no preference for certain things in her communion can ever justify your accepting, in any one the least particular, what you know to be falsehood, as the truth of God. And yet this they must do who take her as their guide. They must come to bear with her trifling with the truth; with her undervaluing of God's Word; with her portentous system of

eremital life, related what had happened to all who wished to hear it. And afterwards, as long as he lived, he celebrated the feast of the conception solemnly and devoutly, and taught its celebration to all."—*Christian Remembrancer*, No. 76, p. 402.

priestcraft, whereby, first, the sacred and inalienable responsibility of conscience is invaded, and then its purity corrupted, and in many instances its very life extinguished; they must endure her substitution of another Mediator for the co-eternal Son, the Virgin-born; they must receive her new-coined dogmas, and her spurious articles of faith. See, then, all this from the beginning, and when she comes to you with her fairest promises, with all her grossness veiled from you, and she herself transformed into an angel of light, to work your downfall, then, to disenchant your beguiled senses, read and weigh the warning graven by the finger of God upon her forehead, and upon that of every other carnal perverter of the Church's purity: "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTHⁱ."

ⁱ Rev. xvii. 5.

